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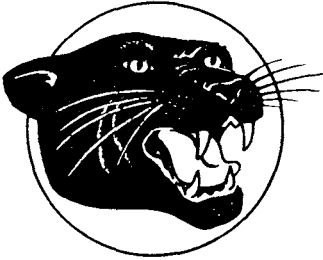
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# **Panther Sports News**

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LS

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, IL--Eastern Illinois University's athletic department has announced that it will implement a women's intercollegiate golf program beginning in the fall, 1984.

Simultaneously it was decided to eliminate field hockey, effective immediately. The University will honor all field hockey scholarships for those women currently enrolled.

"A number of factors, none more important than any other, influenced our decision to make this change," said Athletic Director R. C. Johnson.

"Our field hockey coach recently resigned and we would have had difficulty replacing her since it was and remains a parttime position.

"We have a shortage of current squad members to field a competitive team and the feeder system from Illinois high schools is constantly decreasing.

"Plus golf is a growing prep sport, has always been a popular recreation activity for men and women, and we believe it will be simpler to hire a coach/advisor to be in charge of the program."

Eastern, as well as many other Illinois universities, has had difficulty recruiting field hockey athletes due to lack of prep participation.

For instance, the Illinois High School Association dropped field hockey from its state championship series in 1980 when the number of prep schools that competed dropped below 25.

On the other hand the IHSA has 139 schools out of 825 member institutions competing in its girls golf championship series.

With EIU's switch there are only three universities in the Gateway Collegiate Conference competing in field hockey while the number of schools playing golf will increase to six.

"The addition of golf will also make it a more viable conference sport now that at least half of the Gateway membership competes," said Johnson.